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ABSTRACT

Strategies for teacher retention are presented, including successful approaches and elements for operating a state system for personnel recruitment and retention in special education. Such initiatives as the Utah Mentor Teacher Academy; the Texas Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Assistance Program; and the Kansas Recruitment/Retention Project are briefly discussed, along with elements of beginning teacher programs implemented in 34 states. Major components of a state personnel recruitment and retention system are identified, including data collection and analysis, marketing and recruitment, training and certification, and professional support and enhancement. Appendixes offer strategies which can influence job satisfaction and commitment through teacher supports or work environment changes, in excerpts from four papers: "Fourteen Tips to Help Special Educators Deal with Stress" (ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education); "The Problems of Getting Started: What Administrators Should Know about Beginning Special Education Teachers" (D. J. Gallagher); "Finding and Keeping Experienced Special Education Teachers" (J. M. Schnorr); and from "Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing Exceptional Teachers: Strategies for Florida School Districts" chapter 3 "Retention: Keeping Qualified Personnel" (Florida Department of Education). (SW)

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NSTEP INFORMATION BRIEF (#2-95)

Strategies for Teacher Retention

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Networking System for Training Education Personnel*



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NSTEP INFORMATION BRIEF (#2-95)

Strategies for Teacher Retention

State Initiatives

As part of the CSPD Coordinators' Needs Assessment conducted by NSTEP, seven states (i.e., AR, CA, GA, KS, ME, UT, WV) reported successful practices or approaches to personnel retention. For example, the Utah Mentor Teacher Academy¹ was organized in 1986 to train experienced teachers, who are master teachers, to serve as mentors for less-experienced and beginning teachers. Over a two-year period mentor teachers are trained in the following areas: (a) knowledge base, (b) interpersonal relations, (c) modeling, (d) collaboration and consultation, and (e) coaching. The Mentor Teacher Academy provides the training, but each district develops its own plan for how their trained mentors will be used.

The Texas Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Assistance Program² "sets the stage for teacher retention" by preparing teacher candidates for the classroom. This goal is accomplished through four academies: the *Mentor Training Academy* (a university program that pairs promising minority students in teacher education with incoming school district paraprofessionals); the *Professional Development Academy* (provides professional development training to university faculty); the *Cross Cultural Academy* (provides cross cultural training activities to prepare prospective teachers for teaching in culturally diverse communities); and the *Leadership Enhancement Academy* (establishes a community of colleagues to study and advance knowledge about minority educator recruitment, retention, and enhancement).

The Kansas State Board of Education has initiated a Recruitment/Retention Project³. Some of the functions of this project are (a) to increase the supply of qualified candidates in high demand special education teaching areas; (b) to collect and disseminate suggestions that may ameliorate staffing problems in rural and urban areas; (c) to enhance the Kansas Clearinghouse with materials on recruitment and retention; (d) to provide an active high school recruitment program; and (e) to examine data on personnel supply and demand.

¹ For more information on this program, contact Bruce Schroeder at the Utah Learning Resource Center, (801) 272-3431.

² For more information contact: Evangelina G. Galvan, Director of Programs, Division of Educator Preparation and Certification, Texas Education Agency at 512-463-9327.

³ For more information on the Kansas project, contact Dale Brown, Recruitment/Retention Coordinator, 3107 West 21st Street, Topeka, KS 66604 at 913-296-5483.

In order to respond to issues surrounding teacher supply and quality a number of states have initiated beginning teacher programs. A 50-state survey by Furtwengler (1995) indicated that between 1983 and 1992, 34 states established beginning teacher programs. Of these 34 states, 18 mandated statewide programs (3 states have in some states these were later rescinded). The remaining 16 states either implemented pilot programs or provided competitive grant monies to districts to establish local programs.

A thematic analysis of major components of these programs by Furtwengler identified (a) support for beginning teachers provided by mentors and/or support teams, (b) training programs for staff development, and (c) formative and/or summative evaluation purposes for the program. Regarding the last component, all state-level beginning teacher programs reported a formative evaluation purpose; that is, to assist the novice teacher to become a better teacher. By 1992, 13 states required summative evaluations of new teachers as part of these programs and used the evaluation results for continuing employment and/or certification. States continue to struggle with beginning teacher programs that try to both improve performance and professionalism **and** serve an accountability role. Continued funding also has been a problem. The majority of programs have seen level or declining financial support since implementation.

Devising a Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Whitworth (1994) proposed a state system for personnel recruitment and retention in special education. As part of this discussion, he suggested elements essential to the operation of such a system. These elements were:

- **DATA DRIVEN:** Data collection and analysis shapes and drives the system.
- **PERMANENT:** Personnel shortages in special education require long-term solutions.
- **FLEXIBLE:** The system will require frequent changes in the types of techniques/strategies needed and the available resources.
- **RESPONSIVE:** A successful system must respond quickly and effectively.
- **COMPREHENSIVE:** A good system should address every factor and issue impacting personnel recruitment and retention **and** include all significant stakeholders during its development and implementation.
- **INTEGRATED:** The system should be structured in such a way that each part supports and compliments the others.

The systems model proposed by Whitworth includes four major components, each of which incorporates the elements described above. The components are: *data collection and analysis*; *marketing and recruitment*; *training and certification*; and *professional support and enhancement*. These components are the major focus of activities initiated by a task force on personnel recruitment and retention. The task force establishes work groups to address single issues, such as certification, marketing, or training. The work of these groups is coordinated with the state CSPD plan.

The *data collection and analysis* component is developed by the work group to evaluate the system. The work group needs to determine the type of data to be collected, as well as a mechanism to maintain the system and to provide timely analysis and distribution of data. The work group devoted to *marketing and recruitment* devises specific strategies to market special education and recruit new staff from high schools and training programs both within and outside the state. A *certification* work group needs to study the state's existing certification policies, standards, and practices to determine whether they balance the need for flexibility, speed, and the promotion of high quality special education personnel. Changes should be submitted to the state education agency with clear rationales and recommendations.

The task force might also develop a work group on *training*. This group can identify the number of existing training programs, their requirements and their flexibility. The group can then work to develop training programs/models that would supplement and complement current programs in the state. Similarly, the work group on *professional support and enhancement* participates in a needs assessment to determine appropriate activities for support and career enhancement. The action plan for this component should incorporate innovative and effective methods in the provision of professional development to address local needs.

Specific Strategies for Teacher Retention

A previous NSTEP INFORMATION BRIEF, *Factors that Influence Teacher Attrition* (#1-95) discussed the *external*, *employment*, and *personal* factors that influence decisions to stay, leave, or transfer from teaching assignments. Of the individual variables subsumed by these factors, employment-related variables (e.g., professional qualifications, work conditions, and work rewards) are most amenable to direct intervention at the state and/or local levels.

Several publications have contained lists of strategies that can influence job satisfaction and commitment by changing (improving) the work environment or teacher supports. Four such lists are appended to this report:

Appendix A: Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, (1989). *Fourteen tips to help special educators deal with stress* (#E467). Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children⁴.

Appendix B: Gallagher, D.J. (1993). The problems of getting started: What administrators should know about beginning special education teachers. *Case In Point*, 7(2), 11-21.

⁴ Another good resource on this topic is provided by the Western Regional Resource Center (503-346-5641): Carter, S. (1994). *Organizing Systems to support competent social behavior in children and youth: Teacher stress and burnout*. Eugene: University of Oregon, Western Regional Resource Center.

Appendix C: Schnorr, J.M. (1994, November). *Finding and keeping experienced special education teachers* (pp 4-5). Paper presented at the Teacher Education Division (CEC) Conference, San Diego, CA.

Appendix D: Florida Department of Education. (1990). *Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing Exceptional Teachers: Strategies for Florida School Districts* (pp. 3/1-8). Tallahassee: Author⁵.

References

Furtwengler, C. B. (1995). Beginning teachers programs: Analysis of state actions during the reform era. *Education Policy Analysis Archives* [On-line], 3(3). Available: as a LISTSERV under the name EDPLOYAR at ASUACAD.BITNET (Internet address: ASUVM.INRE.ASU.EDU).

Whitworth, J. E. (1994, November). *Personnel recruitment and retention in special education: Meeting the challenge*. Paper presented at the 17th Annual Conference of the Teacher Education Division, Council for Exceptional Children, San Diego, CA.

⁵ A publication from the Virginia Department of Education provides more detail on some of these strategies. (A copy of this chapter can be obtained from NSTEP): Billingsley, B. S., Warger, C., Littrell, P., & Tomchin, E. (1993). Supporting experienced and beginning teachers of students with disabilities. In B. S. Billingsley (Ed.), *Program leadership for serving students with disabilities* (pp. 405-420). Blacksburg: Virginia Tech.

APPENDIX A

Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, (1989). *Fourteen tips to help special educators deal with stress* (Digest #E467). Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

FOURTEEN TIPS TO HELP SPECIAL EDUCATORS DEAL WITH STRESS

It cannot be denied; education is a stressful business. In a recent survey done by The Council for Exceptional Children, 60% of the respondents rated work-related stress between 7 and 9 on a 10-point scale. Major causes of stress included too much paperwork, lack of time, attitudes of others, and student behavior. Listed below are 14 tips to help keep stress manageable.

Organize Your Time and Your Activities

1. *Set realistic and flexible professional goals and objectives.* Don't set expectations that will be impossible to meet—that only results in failure, frustration, and guilt. Sharing those inflated expectations with others (e.g., telling regular classroom teachers you can consult with them twice weekly while you are carrying full time direct service responsibilities) creates additional pressure that results in stress. Setting expectations too low, on the other hand, can create lethargy and lack of motivation.
2. *Establish priorities.* Each day there seem to be many jobs which must get done. It is helpful to establish priorities to deal with needs in the order of importance. As one job at a time is successfully tackled, a sense of accomplishment can develop. You may discover that low priority items may not have to be done at all.
3. *Leave your work at school.* One of the major problems educators face is bringing work home after school. This causes problems in that schoolwork never seems to be finished, and it often interferes with personal and family life. One way to break that cycle is to avoid bringing work home. Some educators have found staying at school later in the afternoon may be required. Another alternative is going into school very early in the morning to grade papers, do planning, and set up the classroom. Staying in school until as late as seven or eight o'clock on a Friday evening may allow you to enjoy the remainder of the weekend without having schoolwork hanging over your head. Planning a late dinner on Friday night (candles, wine, and children in bed—all optional) may be very therapeutic.
4. *Pace yourself.* Managing time is certainly a key to dealing with stress. Approaches to help avoid wasting time and prevent procrastination include setting realistic time lines, getting high priority work done early in the day (when we tend to work most efficiently), and including time for yourself in each day. Do not try to do everything at once. If you are a new special educator you should not expect to master every aspect of the profession immediately. Nor should you expect to be able to meet everyone else's needs in terms of consultant services, diagnostic evaluations, and so on, while providing direct service to children. It is necessary to pace yourself, not only each day, but for each week and each year. The social worker or psychologist who wants to revise the entire placement

team process or modify the role of special services personnel should expect that goal to take considerable time to fulfill. Small steps to achieving those goals should be identified and cherished.

5. *Use available human resources.* Use the available human resources to their maximum potential. Take the extra time necessary to train an aide or secretary to handle more responsibilities independently. Training students or parent volunteers as classroom aides can result in greatly increased instructional time without increasing your workload.
6. *Organize your classroom.* Improved classroom organization can save time and increase professional productivity. Setting up a catalog system for materials, tests, and instructional techniques can make these resources more accessible to you and to other professionals who have need of them.

Similarly, developing a general filing system or computerized management system so that diagnostic information, IEPs, student performance data, and curriculum objectives are available can improve classroom efficiency. Organizing the classroom so that students can function independently by preparing work folder learning centers or student contracts may free you to attend more directly to individual student needs. Giving students access to classroom materials such as books, paper, pencils, audiovisual equipment, self correcting materials, and training them in their use can likewise improve the learning environment.

Be Open to Change, Innovation, and New Opportunities

7. *Change your environment.* Changing roles from resource teacher to special class teacher, for example, may reduce stress by allowing you to focus on direct service instead of having to cope with the additional demands of diagnosis and consulting. A school counselor who moves from a high school to a junior high school situation may find the job description at the new school more satisfactory. A simple change in environment from one elementary school to another may give you a new perspective, new friends, different students, and new supervisors.
8. *Keep yourself motivated.* It is important to keep motivated. Seeking out new experiences can be one way to maintain professional interest and prevent stagnation. A special educator can try new instructional techniques, implement alternative programs, or develop new materials. A school psychologist can add a test to his or her test battery or try a new counseling technique. Look for opportunities to share your expertise—Present your project at a CEC federation or national conference; submit your curriculum or research to the ERIC database.

9. *Consider career options.* There are many alternative career avenues that special educators and special services personnel should consider to diversify their experience or stimulate interest. Career options include placement team coordinator, itinerant diagnostician, work study coordinator, consultant, and inservice coordinator. In some districts, educators have the option of taking one of those roles for one year and then return, refreshed, to previous responsibilities. There are also many opportunities for part time jobs or job sharing (two educators share one job—one works two days per week, the other three) which may provide a change of pace for weary professionals.
 10. *Seek out personal learning experiences.* Professional and personal growth requires that we keep learning. Certification requirements and school salary schedules encourage educators to take additional coursework. Seek programs of study that are interesting and stimulating as well as appropriate for meeting requirements. Programs that provide new skills needed on the job (i.e., consulting, teaching reading, diagnosis) or that broaden your base of knowledge (a special educator taking courses in psychology or sociology) are ideal. Dropping a course that is irrelevant, poorly taught, or too time consuming may also be very therapeutic. Seeking out personal learning experiences can likewise add productive dimensions to an educator's experience. Taking classes in ceramics, knitting, car maintenance, or home repair, for example, can provide a myriad of benefits. Not only do they develop new skills and interests, but they might even save you money.
- Be Positive About Yourself and Your Profession**
11. *Allow a "moment of glory."* Too often, schools are not very positive places to be. Students, supervisors, parents, and colleagues do not often tell you what a great job you're doing. It is, therefore, important for special educators and special services personnel to accept and acknowledge positive feedback. When someone does praise you, don't reject it. We are very good at allowing false modesty ("I didn't really do anything special") or embarrassment to rob us of our just rewards. A response like, "Yes, I really worked hard and it's gratifying to see the results; it means a lot to me that you've noticed," will not only allow you your moment of glory but will encourage the person gracious enough to bestow some positive reinforcement on a fellow human being.
 12. *Look for the "silver lining."* It is often helpful to seek out the "silver lining" in an otherwise dismal situation. As a consultant to regular classroom teachers, it is not unheard of to walk into a classroom that has received hours of your support only to find calamity prevailing. At that point it is easy to give up in total frustration. A better alternative, however, is to try to find some glimmer of hope in that situation (e.g., "It could have been worse if I hadn't been there; her behavior management techniques were terrible but she was teaching a good lesson.") or to immediately go to another classroom where the teacher has succeeded by implementing your recommendations.
 13. *Become directly involved.* In many cases, working directly to deal with the issues that cause problems can be both therapeutic and productive. Become active in your professional association to institute desired changes. Work with CEC's Political Action Network to influence state and federal legislation. Becoming a member of an inservice training advisory board, curriculum committee, or a task force of the local teachers association may allow you to effectively deal with problems causing stress for yourself and your colleagues. On the other hand, resigning from a committee that is causing frustration or is simply wasting your time, can also be therapeutic.
 14. *Remember the children you serve.* Remember why you have chosen to be a special education teacher or member of the special services staff. Focus on the personal, professional, and philosophical reasons that give meaning to your working hours. Keeping your thoughts on the handicapped children you serve, your pride in professional accomplishments, and your empathy for those who society often rejects, will help you cope with a narrow minded principal, difficult parents, an inane meeting, or the endless paperwork that passes through your hands.

These ideas are based on suggestions presented in *Stress and Burnout—A Primer for Special Education and Special Services Personnel* by Stan F. Shaw, Jeffrey M. Bensky, and Benjamin Dixon, 1981, 61 pp. A CEC/ERIC Publication, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091. Stock No. 223. \$6.25 (CEC Member Price \$5.00) U.S. Funds.

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APPENDIX B

Gallagher, D.J. (1993). The problems of getting started: What administrators should know about beginning special education teachers. *Case In Point*, 7(2), 11-21.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS⁶

Resources

- Prepare a master list of instructional materials and directions for locating them.
- Ask beginning special education teachers about their perceived needs.
- Encourage and support sharing of material among teachers. Provide a central location and check-out procedures to prevent useful materials from "getting out of circulation."
- Encourage beginning teachers to consult with experienced teachers about specific materials and their use.

Work Control

- Attend carefully to the effects of scheduling on the beginning teacher's classroom environment.
- Offer assistance in resolving scheduling conflicts.
- Have experienced special educators share techniques for resolving scheduling conflicts.
- Provide extended orientation to help the beginning teacher learn procedures for completing paperwork.
- Develop a calendar with due dates for an easy reference.
- If possible, assign the beginning teacher a lighter caseload.
- Avoid assigning extra duties.
- Supply curriculum guides and a handbook for developing/using IEP's.
- Discuss advocacy for exceptional students openly so that the beginning teacher can be comfortable developing his/her role as a constructive student advocate.
- Minimize shifts in caseloads as much as possible. When this is impossible, provide assistance in making adjustments.

Collegiality

- Involve the beginning special educator in activities with regular education faculty.
- Arrange for an experienced special educator to serve as a mentor or guide.
- Set aside specific time for collaboration with other teachers.

Achievement and Recognition

- Hold conferences with the beginning special educator to explain evaluation procedures.
- Specifically explain how evaluations will reflect his/her work with exceptional students.
- Discuss the results of evaluations fully. Provide specific suggestions and encouragement. (Tell them what they are doing right.)
- Provide informal feedback regularly.
- Expand your own knowledge about exceptional students and effective instructional programs for them.

⁶ Taken from Gallagher, 1993, pp. 18-19.

APPENDIX C

Schnorr, J.M. (1994, November). *Finding and keeping experienced special education teachers* (pp 4-5). Paper presented at the Teacher Education Division (CEC) Conference, San Diego, CA.

FREQUENTLY MENTIONED RETENTION STRATEGIES⁷

- I. Welcoming new staff
 - a. Preservice training related to local customs & challenges
 - b. Orchestrate social interactions among staff and community
 - c. Orientation to school policies, procedures, & expectations
 - d. Address retention and support systems

- II. Collegiality
 - a. Encourage principals to be supportive (Ranked #1 in Alaska)*
 - b. Encourage principals who support educational change*
 - c. Support teacher networks to share ideas
 - d. Support mentoring and partnerships
 - e. Support teacher assistance teams*
 - f. Promote the school as the center of the community*
 - g. Collaborate with university faculty*
 - h. Share school programs with the community via the media*
 - i. Embrace the culture of the community

- III. Work control
 - a. Provide planning time during work day*
 - b. Cap the case load*
 - c. Cap the class size*
 - d. Provide release time for testing*
 - e. Provide job rotation options*
 - f. Support job sharing*
 - g. Share policy making with teachers
 - h. Provide paraprofessional assistance
 - i. Minimize paperwork
 - j. Include teachers on the school board

- IV. Professional development
 - a. Provide release time for professional development*
 - b. Provide professional development on site*
 - c. Provide stipends for pursuing additional training/endorsements*
 - d. Provide stipends for summer school*
 - e. Sponsor opportunities for graduate work on site*
 - f. Provide access to professional literature*

⁷ Taken from Schnorr, 1994, pp. 4-5 (Table 2). The strategies listed in this table were based upon suggestions from the literature and from district personnel throughout Alaska who participated in recruitment and retention surveys conducted in 1993 and 1994.

- g. Provide access to a videotape library for professional development*
- h. Promote teacher exchanges*
- i. Develop a career ladder*
- j. Encourage teachers to teach professional development courses*
- k. Encourage teachers to develop professional growth plans*
- l. Utilize existing outreach training programs
- m. Encourage involvement in professional development training sponsored by CEC and other professional organizations

V. Achievement & recognition

- a. Facilitate support for programs in the community
- b. Facilitate community appreciation of teachers*
- c. Implement recognition of professional efforts*
- d. Send letters of appreciation/congratulations*
- e. Talk about "successes" and create a positive school climate

VI. Resources

- a. Provide sufficient supplies*
- b. Provide mini grants for special classroom projects*
- c. Provide day care for children*
- d. Provide money for staff to attend conferences
- e. Inform staff of special grant moneys from CSPD

* Noted by teachers and administrators as a positive influence in retention based on surveys conducted during 1993 and 1994.

APPENDIX D

Florida Department of Education. (1990). *Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing Exceptional Teachers: Strategies for Florida School Districts* (pp 3/1-8). Tallahassee: Author.

Chapter 3

Retention: Keeping Qualified Personnel

District practices for retaining personnel may also be useful in attracting new teachers. These features may, in addition, be used selectively to encourage people to consider careers in exceptional student education and thereby increase the pool of future candidates. This chapter describes some steps that districts might take to improve retention of personnel, in terms of working conditions, professional development, collegiality, career options, and community ties. Special attention is given to the retention of new graduates in their early years of teaching. Financial incentives and supplemental compensation were discussed in Chapter 2, but may also have applications for retention.

Understanding Attrition

Prior to implementing retention programs, districts should pinpoint the rate of and reasons for attrition. Causes of attrition are more a local question than a statistical one, and it is desirable to compare the various costs of attrition (dollars, time spent rehiring, loss of expertise and experience) with the costs associated with retention incentives. Another factor is the morale of teachers who may not leave but who are not satisfied with their jobs.

1. Keep track of attrition and gather data on why good teachers leave the district. Exit information may be more candid if it is directed toward the personnel or recruitment office when the teacher actually leaves. Studies of attrition and its causes should identify the age distribution, minority affiliation, and other factors that may help to describe the personnel who leave.

2. Take a survey of job satisfaction across the district or from a sample of teachers.

3. Use the data gathered as a basis for determining changes that would improve retention.

*Who leaves,
who stays,
and why?*

4. Develop a comprehensive program for retaining qualified personnel, considering incentives based on human needs and needs for self-actualization.

Minimize or compensate for disincentives, and maximize incentives. Weak incentives will have little or no impact on retention.

5. Plan incentives developmentally to respond to what is important to teachers at different stages of their careers.

6. Provide support for teachers who may be experiencing difficulty.

Working Conditions

Improved working conditions may relieve all teachers of stress, frustration, and loneliness. Those working with exceptional students may benefit from unique adjustments in their working conditions.

7. Train building principals to be instructional leaders who support teachers. Lack of administrative support is a frequent cause of frustration.

8. Provide training and consultation to enable teachers and principals to design and carry out school improvement projects to solve school-based problems that they identify.

9. Recruit and train community volunteers to assume some of the extracurricular duties ordinarily assigned to teachers (lunchroom duty, bus duty, etc).

10. Provide teachers with sufficient supplies and materials for their classrooms.

11. Increase building security if personnel feel unsafe.

12. Recognize signs of burnout and provide appropriate responses, such as wellness programs and stress reduction workshops.

13. Reduce the transfer of teachers from exceptional student education to general education or private practice by identifying and addressing causes of this type of attrition.

*Building-based
school improvement*

*Stresses in
exceptional
student
education*

- Provide assistance to teachers in completing paper-work requirements. Assign volunteers or aides to assist, provide computer resources.
- Examine and adjust (where necessary) personnel case loads.
- Examine and adjust (where necessary) excessive diversity in age and performance levels, learning styles and needs, behaviors and other characteristics of students comprising a teacher's class load, particularly in classes providing for varying exceptionalities.
- Provide support and training for teachers in working with parents and members of the interdisciplinary team.
- Make consultation available to all teachers who are working with students who have special learning needs.
- Integrate specialized programs, such as exceptional student education, and personnel of these programs into the life of the total school.

14. Institute job rotation, whereby teachers can change assignments or roles for one year out of every four or five. Rotation may not only be horizontal, but also vertical, allowing a teacher to serve in a supervisory or consulting position on rotation.

Career Path Alternatives

Longitudinal studies of teachers' career paths have shown that many leave and return to the profession several times, and that these interruptions are often related to raising a family. Districts might minimize these career interruptions by permitting good teachers to continue in reduced roles, without conflicts over family responsibilities.

15. Set up a day care program for children of teachers during school hours.

16. Institute job-sharing plans whereby people can teach half-time, and two part-time teachers can fill one full-time position.

17. When highly qualified teachers must reduce their time commitment, hire them as part-time mentors, trainers, curriculum consultants, or to complete important short-term tasks for the district.

*Part-time
professional
positions*

Professionalism and Professional Development

Many teachers are motivated by opportunities to grow professionally, particularly if they have choices in the selection of these opportunities.

18. Make professional development an integral part of districtwide opportunities for personnel.

*District-based
training*

19. Arrange for easy access to training needed for extension of certification.

20. Bring advanced degree training to the district, through arrangements with higher education institutions for outreach services.

21. Provide released time for specified professional development activities, particularly those required by the district.

22. Provide scholarships/stipends for teachers who are willing to obtain certification in a new area where personnel are needed.

23. Provide teachers sabbaticals for advanced training, research, or other projects.

*Support for
professional
involvement*

24. Support teachers' participation in professional conferences.

25. Encourage, and identify opportunities for, teachers' participation on local, state, and national committees and task forces.

26. Reimburse part or all of the costs of teachers' dues in professional organizations.

27. Circulate professional literature or make it available in a convenient place.

28. Establish a local mini-grant program for teacher-designed projects.

29. Disseminate information on state and national sources of funding for classroom and school-based projects.

New Vistas

Career advancement options may motivate personnel to remain in the district. Some options may lead to career advancement without abandoning teaching as a career.

30. Design district career ladders with multiple role options. For teachers, such options might include: lead teacher, mentor teacher, trainer, recruiter, trainer, teacher assistance team member or leader, supervisor, curriculum specialist, or administrator. Career ladders for paraprofessionals can lead to teaching roles.

Career options

31. Collaborate with local higher education institutions to develop teachers as adjunct faculty members in the delivery of district-based outreach services and in the campus program.

32. Work with local businesses and industries to develop summer job opportunities for teachers, particularly in fields where new skills can be applied on returning to the classroom.

Summer employment

Collegiality

Particularly in exceptional student education and other specialties, personnel may feel isolated from the rest of the staff. Teachers in rural/remote areas may be geographically isolated from the professional contacts they need.

33. Establish teacher assistance teams, team teaching situations, and other building-based opportunities for teachers to develop collegial relationships.

34. Organize a teacher exchange program whereby teachers visit other schools and classrooms, participate with other teachers, and observe their methods. Teacher exchanges have particular value in isolated areas, where they may be accompanied by student exchange.

Rural exchange programs

35. Facilitate local teacher networks of personnel with similar instructional responsibilities so that members might work together and share ideas and resources for improving schools and instruction.

36. Facilitate regional or statewide networks of teachers with similar responsibilities so that they may communicate issues and ideas concerning the common interest that binds them together.

37. Create a library of videotapes of rural teachers, including these teachers' instructional ideas. Circulate the videos among rural districts, and make it possible for these teachers to contact one another by mail, phone, or electronic mail.

Rural videos

Induction of New Teachers

The highest rate of attrition occurs during the first five years of teaching. Therefore it is useful to provide support to new teachers to support their skills and confidence and improve job satisfaction from the start.

*Vulnerability
of new teachers*

38. Orient new teachers to the school and the community. Provide such information as

- names and duties of school staff members
- administrative procedures
- clear statements of expectations
- curriculum objectives
- course outlines
- calendar of important dates for the school year
- map of the school
- map of the community
- lists of community resources.

39. Assign an experienced teacher to be available to the new teacher in the first few months to answer questions and introduce school activities.

40. Continue the "pen pal" strategy that may have been initiated during recruitment, and augment it with phone calls or direct contact from the original recruiter.

41. Organize a Community Friends program in the community to assist new teachers in locating housing and other community resources.

42. Involve new teachers in an immediate activity outside the classroom that requires interaction with school personnel.

43. Place new teachers in team teaching situations so that support is readily available.

44. Avoid giving new teachers all of the assignments that no one else wants.

Florida districts provide supervised support services to beginning teachers during their first year of employment in the State. While Beginning Teacher Programs are approved as part of each district's Master Inservice Plan, the following are key features:

Beginning Teacher Program

45. Assign a veteran teacher, trained in peer teaching, to work with each new teacher during the first year.

Peer teaching

46. Set up a full induction program, with continued professional development, peer teaching, and emphasis on assistance rather than evaluation, which continues throughout the new teacher's first year on the job.

47. For teachers who are experienced but are new to the district, provide orientation and support that will lead to early acclimation.

Community Ties and Recognition

Most teachers and administrators do a very good job but receive little recognition for what they are accomplishing. In exceptional student education, lack of recognition can be coupled with a slower rate of pupil progress in ways that make personnel question the value of their work. Aside from recognizing a Teacher of the Year as "the best," there should be many ways to show that many teachers are very good at what they do. The community can participate in recognition of teachers and in other activities that make educators feel valued and welcome.

Promotion, recognition, appreciation of personnel

48. Encourage and assist teachers and administrators to write articles about their practices and experiences for professional publications.

49. Set up school and district procedures for identifying promising classroom practices, and disseminate outcomes in the district.

50. Videotape effective teaching techniques of local teachers for use during inservice and staff sessions.

51. Share videotaped teaching methods of local teachers with higher education institutions for use in teacher training courses.

52. Feature teacher activities in district publications.

53. Share newsletters and other information on school and teacher successes with parents.

54. Disseminate news about school-based improvement projects to the school board, administration, and community.

55. Work with the local media to develop a media emphasis on district schools and teachers, with a focus on accomplishments and quality.

56. Identify, and help teachers to develop, opportunities for presentations and workshops at local, state, and national conferences. Facilitate their participation through released time, payment of travel expenses, and other means.

57. Make appreciation of teachers a part of the overall school climate.

58. Collaborate with business, civic, and professional groups to develop recognition programs, awards, volunteer activities, pride in the schools, appreciation of teachers, and other forms of support of and participation with teachers in the schools.

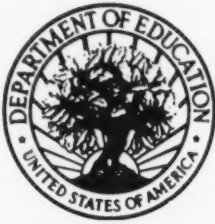
59. Establish a Friends Program in which community members and organizations assist local high school students, teacher applicants, and new teachers by providing temporary housing or transportation for new teachers and applicants, providing scholarships to outstanding high school students who have selected teaching as a career, or sponsoring outstanding teacher education graduates who wish to visit the community. These activities can be targeted particularly to members of minority populations.

*Friends program:
Minorities*

60. Create partnerships through which representatives of business and industry make classroom presentations, offer vocational opportunities, welcome visits by students, provide mentoring and training, and otherwise participate closely with teachers and schools.

61. Make the school a center of community activities in rural areas.

*Rural school
as community center*



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